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ENG 1092-093: Composition and Literature

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1092-093

ENGLISH 1092 – COMPOSITION AND LITERATURE

Spring 2006 / Section #093
MW 6-7:15
Coleman Hall 3150

Dr. Chris Wixson
Coleman Hall 3871
Office Hours: 1:30-3 MW
(Or by appointment)

Required Textbooks: *The Essential Plays*, Anton Chekhov
The Passion, Jeanette Winterson
Hamlet, William Shakespeare
The Turn of the Screw, Henry James
Pocket Style Manual, Diana Hacker

Handouts: *Art Objects*, Jeanette Winterson
Breath, Play, and Come and Go, Samuel Beckett
Battle Royal, Ralph Ellison

Required Supplies: A notebook and a folder for notes, handouts, and in-class work

Course Philosophy

[The study of literature can provide us with] a clue to how we live, how we have been living, how we have been led to imagine ourselves, how our language has trapped as well as liberated us.
-Adrienne Rich

While literature often seems to provide the “answers” to questions about “truth” and “life”, it also has been characterized by a pervasive need for detection on the part of both characters and readers. This detection exists not only in detective stories or mysteries but also underwrites our process of reading, writing, and interpretation. While characters may seek an answer within a text, readers also seek answers about the text. Detection too has its own shapes and assumptions --- that “clues” exist and can be discerned, that information is not always on the surface, that evidence will lead to an answer, that an answer might be had. This course will thus engage, as it applies to ourselves, each other, and existence, this most basic human process (compulsion?): interpretation.

English 1092 is a writing course designed to improve skills in critical thinking and analytical expression based on the reading of literary texts in order to enable you to meet the challenges of future academic tasks and the self-examined life. The syllabus is made up of texts that span genres and time periods, and, among the authors, you may recognize some of the usual English class suspects (William Shakespeare, Anton Chekhov) side by side with less familiar names (Jeanette Winterson, Samuel Beckett). Although not conceptualized as a survey, the course is reading and thinking intensive, necessitating a commitment to class discussion (beyond merely showing up) and courageous consideration of ideas about art, interpretation, writing, culture, existence, and desire. The format of each class will be relatively fluid, changing with regard to the material, my ideas, and your interests. Remember this is not MY class but ours and

should be understood as an ongoing conversation. 1092 is a *writing-centered* course, from which you will be submitting essays for inclusion in your university-required portfolios. Please let me know if you wish to discuss this requirement and its procedure.

******We are lucky this semester to be working with Lisa Chamberlin, a current graduate student in English and member of the Writing Center staff. She will be an invaluable resource for our literary and rhetorical endeavors.

Learning Outcomes

1. To write expository and persuasive papers in which paragraphs, sentences, and words develop a central idea that responds to reading of literary works.
2. To read fiction and drama expressing a wide range of cultural perspectives and values and to think critically and write analytically about them.
3. To engage in reading and writing experiences about literature so as to establish a foundation for continued social, cultural, intellectual, and aesthetic discovery and appreciation.

Course Policies

Attendance: I expect you to be in class awake and prepared every Monday and Wednesday. In other words, arrive on time with your reading/writing assignment completed, prepared to participate in discussion. If you are not a “late afternoon” person, it is important to realize that now and switch into one of the other sections. Because so much in this course relies upon in-class work, frequent absences and habitual lateness will adversely affect your course performance. Attendance will be taken at each class session – you are allowed **two** unexcused absences before your grade is negatively affected. After two, each unexcused absence will lower your participation grade by a letter. **More than four unexcused absences will result in a “0” for participation. More than six unexcused absences will result in a grade of no credit for the course.** Students missing or more than five minutes late to conferences or peer critique sessions will lose points from that paper grade and, if missed, receive no comments on their draft. Please notify me by email if there is unexpected illness or an emergency that causes you to miss class. Do **not** get in touch asking “for the assignment” or a “rundown of what you missed.” My responsibilities as an instructor lie with the students who do come to class.

******If you have a *documented* disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Late Papers: These are no fun for me to keep track of and only put you further behind. For each day beyond the scheduled due date, late papers will be penalized a third of a letter grade. **After a week, I will no longer accept the paper, and it becomes a “0.”** Again, if you become ill or the victim of emergency circumstances, please email me as soon as possible and stay in touch.

Plagiarism: Any paper with your name on it signifies that you are the author--that the wording and major ideas are yours, with exceptions indicated by either quotation marks and/or citations. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use (appropriation and/or imitation) of others' materials (words and ideas). We will discuss how to avoid it. Evidence of plagiarism will result in one or more of the following: a failing grade for the assignment, an F in the course, and a report filed with the Judicial Affairs Office.

Conferences: Please set up an appointment to discuss your work or any aspect of the course. E-mail is another place where questions and concerns can be addressed. There will be mandatory conferences later in the term during the writing process for the last two essays.

Class Participation: You should come to class *prepared to talk* about the reading for that day. *You are required each class session to show up with a productive "seed question" for discussion.* We will discuss how to go about developing good questions. Each session, you must arrive with your discussion question written out, ready to discuss it and everyone else's. Your own questions and comments about the texts are integral to the success of the course. If there is a lagging discussion, I will assume that you understand the text perfectly and will give a quiz.

Class participation means that you work actively to stretch yourself intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually AND that you work actively to contribute to the class's overall movement and success. (This might mean, for example, moving from merely your position during class discussion to striving to promote dialogue between yourself and other students). I TAKE THIS GRADE VERY SERIOUSLY.

If you plan on doing either of the following things, you should probably drop this class:

1. Remaining in your comfort zone and not talking in class and justifying the silence by saying you are 'just the type of person who likes to sit back and listen to what everyone else has to say.' Certainly, listening is a premium in this class and is a crucial human skill. But real listening only happens in an exchange. Letting everyone else do the talking means that you're not really listening because you are busy keeping yourself safe. Of course, this 'safety' is an illusion.
2. Remaining in your comfort zone and not talking in class and justifying the silence because you assume that you don't know enough to participate in class and other people (especially those who talk) do. To approach the class and the work in a way that suggests that one can speak only about what is already known is not only dangerous, but it's also intellectually lazy.

Email: You should get into the habit of checking your email daily. There will be a class list on which I will post changes in assignments (if they arise), course-related announcements, and ideas that expand upon what happens in class. This list is also a great way for all of us to interact outside of class; that is to say, if you have a question or query, the miracle of technology offers us a way to discuss and address it.

Assignments:

- *A Research Project and Presentation
- *Manifesto paper (4-5 pages)----details to come.
- *Active, Engaged Participation in Discussion --- defined as TALKING productively.
- *Two Critical Papers (4-5 pages) and Shorter Response Papers

FINAL GRADES: Your final grade in the course will be determined by your performance on the following assignments:

Two Critical Essays (4-5 pages each)	40%
Research Project/Presentation	20%
2 Response Papers	10%
Manifesto (4-5 pages)	10%
Short In-Class Writing / Quizzes / Active Participation	20%

****You must complete all assignments to complete the course. Failure to complete any one of the components represents incomplete work for the semester and anyone with incomplete work will not receive a passing grade for the course.**

Schedule of Assignments

THIS SCHEDULE MAY CHANGE AT ANY TIME ACCORDING TO THE NEEDS AND DEMANDS OF THE CLASS. MAKE SURE YOU ALWAYS BRING IT WITH YOU FOR MODIFICATION.

January	9	Introductory Comments / Writing Self-Evaluation
	11	Interpreting Literary Texts Winterson's "Art Objects" / Beckett shorts Response Due (Everyone)
	16	NO CLASS – MLK Jr. Day
	18	Mandatory Conferences -- First Draft of Critical Essay #1 Due
	23	Shakespeare's <u>Hamlet</u>
	25	<u>Hamlet</u> -- Final Draft of Critical Essay #1 Due
	30	<u>Hamlet</u>
February	1	<u>Hamlet</u> Response Due A-H
	6	Winterson's <u>The Passion</u>
	8	<u>The Passion</u>

	13	<u>The Passion</u> Response Due I-L
	15	<u>The Passion</u>
	20	James' <u>Turn of the Screw</u> Response Due M-O
	22	<u>Turn of the Screw</u>
	28	<u>Turn of the Screw</u>
March	1	First Draft of Critical Essay #2 Due – Two Copies
	6	Mandatory Conferences
	8	Critical Essay #2 Due

HAPPY SPRING BREAK!!!!!!

	20	Chekhov's <u>The Seagull</u>
	22	<u>The Seagull</u> Response Due P-Z
	27	<u>The Seagull</u>
	29	Ellison's "Battle Royal" / Manifesto Paper Due
April	3	Research Workshop
	5	Research Workshop
	10	Mandatory Conferences
	12	Mandatory Conferences
	17	First Draft of Research Paper Due -- Two Copies
	19	Research / Revision Workshop
	24	Final Draft of Research Paper Due / Presentations
	26	Presentations